

## ITMC 2015 Project Excellence Awards

**Project Title:** Montana Safety Assessment Management (MSAMS)

**Agency:** Department of Health and Human Services (DPHHS)

**Nominated by:**

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**Summary Paragraph:**

MSAMS automates the process of tracking reports of potential abuse and neglect of Montana's children. Montana Child and Family Services triages reports to one of 37 county offices which investigate allegations of abuse. MSAMS enables workers to communicate, track, complete, and submit the safety assessment supervisors for approval.

**Project Description:**

The MSAMS Service, implemented in February 2014, consolidated and streamlined the Safety Assessment process starting at Centralized Intake and progressing to an In-Home or Out-of-Home Safety Plan. MSAMS is a web-based application, which allows for the immediate report intake and the instant assignment of reports to supervisors in the field who in turn will have the ability to immediately assign a report to a Child Protective Services worker.

MSAMS automates the process of tracking reports of potential abuse and neglect of Montana's children. Montana Child and Family Services triages reports to one of the 37 county offices which investigate allegations of abuse. MSAMS enables workers to communicate, track, complete, and submit the safety assessment processes to the supervisor for approval. The system allows only those documents needed for each level of danger that exists. It interfaces with the state's mainframe CAPS system via screen scraping so that information on persons that

is held in CAPS can be used in MSAMS. Once a report has been completed and is closed, the documents from MSAMS are ported into DocGen and stored as pdf files.

Workers can log into MSAMS and immediately see and use all the reports to which they are assigned, and the current status of each. They can input information, learn what information needs to come next, and collaboratively work with their supervisor to determine if the necessary procedures are being followed. All information is secured by a three-part authentication process; users must use their state Active Directory login to get in, and this login number is uploaded to MSAMS every night. Next, first time users must input their CAPS ID and password. This all runs through ePass Montana, the solution created and maintained by the partner, Montana Interactive.

Previously, the only automation was in CAPS, a mainframe system that stores information about people. When the Safety Assessment Management System process was implemented, there needed to be a system to automate and track that process - provide alerts, create a work flow, perform validations, and submit completed documents for approval. The process was highly manual and paper-based, and therefore more time-consuming. Automation not only enables much better communication and tracking, it saves the worker time, enabling the worker to spend more time investigating allegations, talking to families, creating safety plans, and other activities that translate into better outcomes for abused and neglected children.

The goal was to automate and streamline data entry, tracking, and workflow for Child Protective Services workers. The legacy system, still currently in use to track person and provider information, does not have assessment capability. MSAMS interfaces with the mainframe system and provides a very user-friendly, robust means of investigating and documenting reports of potential or actual child abuse.

In the one year that the system was up and running, it has saved workers innumerable hours of time saved creating and tracking paper documents and improved communication between administrators, supervisors, and workers. As no metrics were performed prior to the implementation of MSAMS regarding the number of hours per report, and there is no way to measure the inefficiency of missed communications, no specific hours or dollar amounts are available. However those who benefit, first and foremost, are Montana's Children. There are approximately 280 state workers laboring to assess their situations and get them into protective care when necessary also benefit because they are freed up to do more of what they do best – investigate allegations, assess safety, and create safety plans.